

14 Synonyms of Conceit

In the extensive Pāli-Myanmar Dictionary, which has around 24 volumes, there is an interesting exposition about conceit (*māna*) in connection to the Pāli scriptures. I was not able to find the reference to the list given there, but I find it very interesting and worth sharing with you. I add my interpretation of each of the synonyms, so that you can better understand the meaning. You are most welcome to interpret them in your way and possibly share your understanding with me. :-)

ပါဠိ-မြန်မာ အဘိဓာန် အတွဲ (၁၆) (မစိုးရိမ်ကျောင်း) - Pāli-Myanmar Dictionary, vol. 16, by Ma-Soe-Yein Monastery

မာနပရိယာယ် (၁၄)မျိုး - 14 synonyms of *māna* (conceit)

1. ဂါဟ - အာရုံ၌ ပြင်းစွာစွဲလမ်း ဖမ်းယူတတ်သည်။ - *Gāha* (grasping) – may catch and grasp an object by strong attachment.

When objects such as forms, sounds, smells, arise in their respective faculties there arises the attachment to them, not realizing their impermanent nature. This is based on the idea that “I am perceiving”, or “This is my perception”, or “I am perception”. Through such conceit one is grasping an object by strong attachment, like a dog voraciously biting a perfectly clean bone.

2. ပပဉ္စ - သံသရာ၌ ရှည်ကြာစေတတ်၊ သံသရာကို ချဲ့ထွင်တတ်သည်။ - *Papañca* (delay) – may delay (the sojourn) in *Saṃsāra*, may extend *Saṃsāra*.

The idea that “I am” creates the idea “I want to be”. With this clinging for existence (*bhava taṇhā*) one generates the craving for new birth (*bhavanikanti*), which is most prominent at the very moment of one’s death. For *Arahants* there is no craving for new birth (*bhavanikanti*), hence they are no more born in *Saṃsāra* after they pass away.

3. မညနာ - မဟုတ်သည်ကို အဟုတ်ထင်မှတ်တတ်၊ အထင် မှားတတ်သည်။ - *Maññānā* (imagination) – may present untrue as true, may cause misperception.

Although these five aggregates, namely body, feelings, perceptions, volitions (/decisions), and consciousness, are changing every moment just like a candle fire, living beings call it permanent, pleasant, ‘self’. As is explained in the Commentary for *Sāmaññīphala Sutta* (DNA 2) in *Satisampajaññakathā*, “each moment this body arises & passes the mind changes with it, following without space, occurring like a stream of river.” Although both the body and mind are constantly changing in dependence of previous causes, ignorance (*avijjā*) and conceit present them as ‘self’.

4. ပလိပေဓ - မဂ်ဖိုလ် နိဗ္ဗာန်ကို ဝိတ်ဆို့ကာကွယ်တတ်၊ နောက်ရှက်တတ်သည်။ - *Palibodha* (obstruction) – may close up and hinder from Path and Fruition of Nibbāna.

Conceited person not only considers his/her worldly attainments as sufficient and superb, but he/she also commits deeds that create unwholesome *kamma* – thus being unable to proceed in the Noble Path. Laziness and satisfaction with worldly pleasures are opposite to Eightfold Noble Path - the practice of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (meditation), and *paññā* (wisdom).

5. သင်္က - ကပ်ငြိတတ်၊ ကပ်ငြိစေတတ်သည်။ - *Sariga* (attachment) – may be sticky, may stick.

When there is conceit in the mind, there is also craving. Certain yogis report, after some experience in their *vipassanā* meditation, that when greed (*lobha*) arises in their mind they perceive as if their mind stuck on the object and just slowly separated like two objects glued by an old glue. In an untrained mind the separation is as difficult as in the case of superglue.

6. သလ္လ - ညှဉ်းပန်းနှိပ်စက်တတ်၊ အတွင်း၌ ထိုးစွာတတ်၊ နှပ်နှိပ်ပယ်ရှားနိုင်ခဲသည်။ - *Salla* (dart) – may torment and oppress, may pierce inside, is difficult to remove and get rid of.

A conceited person suffers not only when strong greed arises in him/her, but also when hatred and dissatisfaction arise, whether toward an object or a living being. Attachment to views (*diṭṭhupādāna*) is the cause of one’s dissatisfaction with the vicissitudes of the world, namely gain (*lābha*), loss (*alābha*), fame (*yaśa*), loneliness (*ayasa*), blame (*nindā*), praise (*pasamsa*), pleasure (*sukha*), and displeasure (*dukkha*). Suffering caused by one’s conceited mind is often disregarded, unknown, and therefore not examined, not analyzed. Only examination and analysis of one’s mental suffering will lead to its utter cessation.

7. ဗန္ဓန/သံယောဇန - နှောက်ဖွဲ့တတ်သည်။ - *Bandhana/Samyojana* (bond) – may bind.

Conceit doesn't bind oneself only to the idea of "I am such", "I am not such", "My self is such", "My self is not such", "This is me", "This is not me", but it also binds to the perceptions of one's relatives and friends, believing "this is my father", "this is my mother", "this is my teacher", binding oneself to them, hindering oneself from own wise reflection, own search of truth. Consequently, when they pass away, one is crying, lamenting, veiling, losing the excellent opportunity to reflect on death as the universal nature of all living beings. Conceit also makes one bound to one's property, success, and respect, hindering him/her from letting go, freedom, *Nibbāna*.

8. ကိဉ္ဇန - တုန်လှုပ်တတ်သည်။ - *Kiñcana* (trouble) – may cause unrest [/“may shake”].

When one is successful, he/she worries that the success may be lost. When one is not successful, he/she worries that it won't be better. Being thus distressed and anxious about one's success, there is no space for peace, no space for meditation. Even those who are completely free from greed (*lobha*) and hatred (*dosa*) but still have some remnants of ignorance (*avijjā*), i.e. the Non-Returns (*Anāgāmi*) may be subject to unrest in their mind.

9. ဂဟန - ရှုပ်ထွေးသော တောကဲ့သို့ အသိခက်သည်။ - *Gahana* (thicket) – is difficult to recognize like a dense (/“tangled”) forest.

For a yogi it is most important that he/she exterminates their conceit. But this is possible only through careful observation of impermanence (*aniccā*) and unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) in all phenomena. When one tries to search for not-self (*anattā*) directly, thinking "I will get rid of conceit", it will rarely be successful. Often-times people who are very generous, live ethically, and much meditate, think "now I am no more conceited", "now I am humble", and beating their breasts, they proudly boast to their friends and foes not recognizing their own folly.

10. ဆဒ - ကုသိုလ်တရားကို ဖုံးလွှမ်းပိတ်ဆို့ကာကွယ်တတ်သည်။ - *Chada* (veil) – may cover, close up and hinder wholesomeness.

Conceit is especially strong when it is joined with wrongly directed intelligence. The sufferer then makes all effort to make excuses, rationalize and substantiate whatever bad deed he/she does. Thus the conceit covers the truth of one's demerit and bars the Noble Path.

11. အနုဿ - သတ္တဝါတို့၏ သန္တာန်၌ အမြဲ ကိန်းဝပ်တတ်သည်။ - *Anusaya* (tendency) – may forever (/always) dwell in the mind-continuum of beings.

"*Anamataggoyam bhikkhave saṃsāro*" are the words of the Buddha, recorded in *Tiṇakaṭṭha Sutta* (SN 2.4.1.1.). It means „monks, the cycle of rebirth (*Samsāra*) is without a knowable end." Living beings are craving for their illusory 'selves' and thus move from birth to birth, from death to death, from hell to hell, from suffering to suffering. Birth in heaven and human realm are extremely rare, explained the Buddha in *Nakhasikha Sutta* (SN 2.9.2.).

12. ကိလေသ - ပူလောင်တတ်၊ နှိပ်စက်တတ်သည်။ - *Kilesa* (affliction) – may burn, may oppress.

Lust is a very rough emanation of conceit, and it is also well known as 'burning'. There were many men and women, who committed suicide and other self-torture just because they were infatuated and not satisfied. When a person who expects respect and fame is disrespected and lonely, he/she may become seriously sick, and possibly die. According to *Upāli Sutta* (MN 56), this once happened to Nigaṇṭha Nāthaputta, the leader of jains, when he heard the householder Upāli's eulogy on the Buddha. Being so distressed with his loss of respect and admiration, Nigaṇṭha Nāthaputta vomited hot blood and passed away.

13. နဠ - အနှစ်မပါ အကာသာ ဖြစ်သောကြောင့် ကျူပင်နှင့် တူရသည်။ - *Nāla* (reed) – because it has no essence, being a void, it is same as reed.

Conceit is based on one's perception. And perception, as the Buddha explained in *Phenapiṇḍūpama Sutta* (SN 3.1.5(10).3.) is like a mirage seen in the noon in summer. A wise man looks at it, examines it, and understands that it is void, unsubstantial. When one perceives one's success or attainments as "my success", "my attainment", he/she is no more progressing on the Noble Path, rather he/she is stuck and not progressing at all. In that sutta the Buddha also explained, that body is comparable to foam on river, feelings are comparable to water bubbles that arise and disappear in rain, volitions (/decisions) are comparable to the woodless banana plantain, and consciousness is as empty as an illusionist's illusion. All of this body and mind is unsubstantial, void, and thus worth detachment.

14. ဥမ္မာဒ - ဘဝင်မြင့်သော သဘောရှိ၍ အရူးနှင့် တူရသည်။ - *Ummāda* (madness) – because it has the nature of arrogance, it is same as madness.

For conceited person it is very easy to descend to arrogance, to overestimation, to forgetfulness of one's true nature. As such, one then presents oneself as the boss, as the best, as the master – being a slave, a loser, a madman.

May we all soon get free from all conceit,
And thus attain the bliss of boundless freedom,
Nibbāna.
Monk Sarana